

'Bugsy,' 2/20/92 *'JFK,' 'Tides'* *Top Oscar* *Nominees*

'Boyz' Up for 2 Awards; Barbra Streisand Snubbed

By Rita Kempley
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The directors of "Bugsy" and "JFK" felt vindicated yesterday as their movies racked up 10 and eight Oscar nominations, respectively, for the 64th annual Academy Awards. But the directing talents of Barbra Streisand, whose "Prince of Tides" garnered seven nominations, were conspicuously overlooked.

"Bugsy" director Barry Levinson called his movie's first-place finish the culmination of "an uphill battle against a lot of negative vibes." Other gangster movies didn't do well last year, he noted, and audiences weren't flocking to see another effort in that genre. Added James Toback, who was nominated for his "Bugsy" screenplay: "I was hoping to get enough [votes] to give the movie a transfusion. Otherwise it would have just died."

Warren Beatty, nominated for his role as the glamorous gangster Benjamin Siegel, said he was "surprised we got the audience we did. . . . I mean, a movie about a seedy, sleazy character who, if you get to like him at all, gets killed off in the end? You know going in that you're not making 'Raiders of the Lost Ark.'"

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Oscars

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Oliver Stone, whose "JFK" was denounced as a political polemic in many quarters, said: "The people voted, in a way. The people came to the movies in large quantities; that's a vindication in itself."

Like "Bugsy," "JFK" could use a box office boost, though "The Prince of Tides" is still holding in the Top 10. All three films were nominated for Best Picture, along with the psycho-thriller "The Silence of the Lambs" and the animated Disney romance "Beauty and the Beast." A slight, if not staggering surprise, "B & B" is the first animated feature ever nominated in this category. "It's a historic day for us animator folk," said producer Don Hahn, who got up at 5:30 a.m. yesterday to catch the moment. "I only spilled a little coffee."

Disney honcho Jeffrey Katzenberg was also ecstatic about the nomination, one of six in all for the film. Just getting the nomination was a triumph, he said in a voice hoarse from accepting congratulations.

There were other history-making nominations. The academy recognized, for the first time, a black director, John Singleton. His Best-Director nomination for "Boyz n the Hood" also makes him, at 24, the youngest filmmaker ever to be nominated in the category. Singleton also was nominated for Best Original Screenplay for his first film, a coming-of-age story set in a tough Los Angeles neighborhood.

"The Silence of the Lambs" producer Ken Utt, a self-described North Carolina pea picker, was "absolutely tickled to death" with the film's seven nominations. "The movie began in Washington at the FBI headquarters," added Utt, who sends his thanks to all the G-men who helped make the film a success. "If we win or not, it's still terrific."

Meanwhile, some in Hollywood were not crowing but carping.

In a statement, Mark Canton, chairman of Columbia Pictures, called it "truly shocking that Barbra Streisand was overlooked as a Best Director nominee for 'The Prince of Tides.' We think this is Barbra's movie, and that she deserves recognition for the absolutely vital role she played in every aspect of making the film." (Her male lead, Nick Nolte, was nominated, as expected.)

The fact that she received a Best Director tap for "Prince" from the Director's Guild "makes this oversight... particularly hard to accept," wrote Canton, who came to Columbia after the picture was filmed. (Previously, he was at Warner Bros., which passed on "Prince.")

But some observers said the temperamental Streisand has only herself to blame. A publicist at a rival studio said, "People try to make you believe it's a thing about women. It's about her. It's about being Barbra Streisand."

Streisand's directorial work on 1983's "Yentl" also was snubbed, though the film received five nominations. Ridley Scott was nominated for his direction of the distaff road picture "Thelma & Louise," whose leading ladies Geena Davis and Susan Sarandon were nominated for Best Actress, along with Jodie Foster ("The Silence of the Lambs"), Laura Dern ("Rambling Rose") and Bette Midler ("For the Boys").

Midler, who also won a Golden Globe for her role as a brassy USO entertainer, sent a fax: "I always knew my fellow actors had exquisite taste. But seriously, I'm absolutely knocked out." Word is that Academy members felt sorry for Midler, who has been distraught over the failure of "Boys."

Notably missing from this category was Annette Bening, whose

And the Nominees Are...

Picture: "Beauty and the Beast," "Bugsy," "JFK," "The Prince of Tides," "The Silence of the Lambs."
 Actor: Warren Beatty, "Bugsy"; Robert De Niro, "Cape Fear"; Anthony Hopkins, "The Silence of the Lambs"; Nick Nolte, "The Prince of Tides"; Robin Williams, "The Fisher King."
 Actress: Geena Davis, "Thelma & Louise"; Laura Dern, "Rambling Rose"; Jodie Foster, "The Silence of the Lambs"; Bette Midler, "For the Boys"; Susan Sarandon, "Thelma & Louise."
 Supporting Actor: Tommy Lee Jones, "JFK"; Harvey Keitel, "Bugsy"; Ben Kingsley, "Bugsy"; Michael Lerner, "Barton Fink"; Jack Palance, "City Slickers."
 Supporting Actress: Diane Ladd, "Rambling Rose"; Juliette Lewis, "Cape Fear"; Kate Nelligan, "The Prince of Tides"; Mercedes Ruehl, "The Fisher King"; Jessica Tandy, "Fried Green Tomatoes."
 Director: John Singleton, "Boyz n the Hood"; Barry Levinson, "Bugsy"; Oliver Stone, "JFK"; Jonathan Demme, "The Silence of the Lambs"; Ridley Scott, "Thelma & Louise."
 Original Screenplay: John Singleton, "Boyz n the Hood"; James Toback, "Bugsy"; Richard LaGravenese, "The Fisher King"; Lawrence Kasdan and May Kasdan, "Grand Canyon"; Callie Khouri, "Thelma & Louise."
 Adapted Screenplay: Agnieszka Holland, "Europa Europa"; Fanne Flagg and Carol Sonnet, "Fried Green Tomatoes"; Oliver Stone and Zachary Sklar, "JFK"; Pat Conroy and Becky Johnston, "The Prince of Tides"; Ted Tally, "The Silence of the Lambs."
 Foreign Film: "Children of Nature," Iceland; "The Elementary School," Czechoslovakia; "Mek-terano," Italy; "The Ox," Sweden; "Raise the Red Lantern," Hong Kong.
 Art Direction: "Barton Fink," "Bugsy," "The Fisher King," "Hook," "The Prince of Tides."
 Cinematography: "Bugsy," "JFK," "The Prince of Tides," "Terminator 2: Judgment Day," "Thelma & Louise."
 Costume Design: "The Addams Family," "Barton Fink," "Bugsy," "Hook," "Madame Bovary."
 Documentary Feature: "Death on the Job," "Doing Time: Life Inside the Big House," "In the Shadow of the Stars," "The Restless Conscience: Resistance to Hitler Within Germany 1933-1945," "Wild by Law."
 Documentary Short Subject: "Birdnesters of Thailand (Shadow Hunters)," "Deadly Deception: General Electric, Nuclear Weapons and Our Endowment," "A Little Vicious," "The Mark of the Master," "Mammoth: Letters From American Soldiers."
 Film Editing: "The Commitments," "JFK," "The Silence of the Lambs," "Terminator 2: Judgment Day," "Thelma & Louise."
 Makeup: "Hook," "Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country," "Terminator 2: Judgment Day."
 Music Original Score: "Beauty and the Beast," "Bugsy," "The Fisher King," "JFK," "The Prince of Tides."
 Music Original Song: "Beauty and the Beast" from "Beauty and the Beast"; "Bele" from "Beauty and the Beast"; "Be Our Guest" from "Beauty and the Beast"; "Everything I Do (I Do It for You)" from "Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves"; "When You're Alone" from "Hook."
 Animated Short Film: "Blackfly," "Manipulation," "Strings."
 Live Action Short Film: "Birch Street Oym," "Last Breeze of Summer," "Session Man."
 Sound: "Backdraft," "Beauty and the Beast," "JFK," "The Silence of the Lambs," "Terminator 2: Judgment Day."
 Sound Effects Editing: "Backdraft," "Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country," "Terminator 2: Judgment Day."
 Visual Effects: "Backdraft," "Hook," "Terminator 2: Judgment Day."

of the Lambs") and Beatty.

One notable omission from the Best Actor list was "JFK" star Kevin Costner. Oliver Stone expressed disappointment: "Considering what this movie has been through, it is really wonderful to have your peers regard its values. I'm really sad for Kevin, who did a powerful job of anchoring this movie in an underestimated way, but I am very, very happy for Tommy Lee Jones, for whom it has been a long time coming."

Jones was nominated for Best Supporting Actor for his role of Clay Shaw, one of the co-conspirators in "JFK." His competition in the category includes Harvey Keitel and Ben Kingsley of "Bugsy," Michael Lerner of "Barton Fink" and Jack Palance of "City Slickers." Palance, who hasn't been nominated since his heyday in the '50s, will probably nab the prize for a lifetime achievement.

Diane Ladd, nominated last year for "Wild at Heart," is in the running for

Best Supporting Actress again for her role as the sensible matriarch in "Rambling Rose." A relentless self-promoter, she faces feisty competition from Juliette Lewis, the teenage prey in "Cape Fear," Kate Nelligan, the mother in "The Prince of Tides," Mercedes Ruehl, the girlfriend in "The Fisher King," and Jessica Tandy, the storytelling granny in "Fried Green Tomatoes." The race is wide open.

Conventional wisdom has it that the sentimental psycho-drama "Prince of Tides" has the inside track for winning Best Picture. People say the academy will not give its top honor to a picture about a serial killer who dresses in human skin, or a much-maligned political polemic. But "Bugsy's" strong showing belies the notion that the film was beloved only by critics, leaving even those in the industry cold.

Staff writer Kim Masters contributed to this story.